Listing of Claims:

1-67 (Canceled).

68.   (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

transmitting in compressed time format a plurality of video programs to high speed memory buffers at a plurality of consumer locations for automatic ~~storage~~ buffering at the consumer locations without consumer selection or using individual consumer preference information; and

billing a consumer location within the plurality of consumer locations once an automatically stored video program from the plurality of transmitted video programs has been selected for viewing.

69.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68, further comprising:

encoding the transmitted video programs with data permitting playback only on a playback device with compatible decoder.

70.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68 further comprising:

encoding the transmitted video programs with time-based code keys A.

71.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 70 wherein the time-based code keys A encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to the plurality of consumer locations and time-based code keys C that are provided to consumer locations within the plurality of consumer locations that are in good standing, wherein a customer can only view a video program if all three code keys A, B and C have been received.

72.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 71 further comprising:

communicating video program playback information from each consumer location to a central controller system when the time-based code keys C are provided.

Docket No.: IVOO-0097
Application No.: 09/385,671
Office Action Dated: July 25, 2006

PATENT
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PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116

73.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 68 wherein the act of transmitting a plurality of video programs is carried out by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels in compressed-time format.

74.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 68.

75.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 69.

76.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 70.

77.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 71.

78.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 72.

79.   (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon for performing the method of claim 73.

80.   (Currently Amended) A device, comprising:

a receiving mechanism configured to receive a plurality of video programs transmitted together in compressed time format for automatic ~~storage~~ buffering in a high speed memory buffer at a consumer location without consumer selection or using individual consumer preference information;

~~selected by a particular consumer location associated with the video recording device;~~
~~and~~

a recording mechanism configured to record said video programs automatically at a consumer location ~~without consumer selection or using individual consumer preference~~ ~~information;~~ and

Docket No.: IVOO-0097
Application No.: 09/385,671
Office Action Dated: July 25, 2006

PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116

a billing mechanism in communication with the playback mechanism configured to transmit billing information to a central billing system accounting for each time an automatically recorded video program has been selected for playback.

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81.   (Currently Amended) The device of claim 80 further comprising:

a playback mechanism configured to playback recorded video programs upon selection for playback by a user; and

a billing mechanism in communication with the playback mechanism configured to transmit billing information to a central billing system accounting for each time an automatically recorded video program has been selected for playback.

82.   (Previously Presented) The device of claim 81 further comprising:

a control mechanism in communication with the receiving mechanism configured to verify a received combination of time-based code keys for authorizing play-back of said transmitted video programs at a desired time, and enabling said playback.

83.   (Previously Presented) The device of claim 82 further comprising:

a decoding mechanism in communication with the control mechanism configured to decode transmitted video programs wherein time-based code keys A that are encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to a plurality of consumer locations and time-based code keys C that are provided to consumer locations within the plurality of consumer locations that are in good standing such that a consumer can only view a video program if all three code keys A, B and C have been received by the playback device.

84.   (Previously Presented) The device of claim 83 wherein the billing mechanism comprises:

a mechanism configured to communicate an identity of said video program and a unique identifying address associated with said consumer to said central billing system upon initiating play-back of the video program; and

Docket No.: IVOO-0097
Application No.: 09/385,671
Office Action Dated: July 25, 2006

PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116

a playback-enabling mechanism configured to receive from said central billing system the third time-based code key for identifying a status of said consumer to enable said play-back of said video program.

85.   (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:

a mechanism configured to transmit a plurality of video programs to <u>high speed memory buffers at </u>a plurality of consumer locations for automatic <s>storage</s> <u>buffering </u>at the consumer locations without consumer selection or using individual consumer preference information; and

a billing mechanism configured to bill a consumer location within the plurality of consumer locations once an automatically stored video program from the plurality of transmitted video programs has been selected for viewing.

86.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 85, further comprising:

an encoder configured to encode the transmitted video programs with data permitting playback only on a playback device with compatible decoder.

87.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 85 further comprising:

an encoder configured to encode the transmitted video programs with time-based code keys A.

88.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 87 wherein the time-based code keys A encoded into the transmitted video programs are correlated with periodic time-based code keys B that are blanket transmitted to the plurality of consumer locations and time-based code keys C that are provided to consumer locations within the plurality of consumer locations that are in good standing, wherein a customer can only view a video program if all three code keys A, B and C have been received.

89.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 88 further comprising:

a mechanism configured to communicate video program playback information from each consumer location to a central controller system when the time-based code keys C are provided.

90.   (Previously Presented) The system of claim 85 wherein the mechanism configured to transmit a plurality of video programs is configured to transmit by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels in compressed-time format.